



HR1121

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The island nation of Haiti is steeped in a rich  
3 culture and history; on January 12, 2010, a magnitude-7.0  
4 earthquake struck Haiti, with its epicenter just outside the  
5 capital and population center of Port-au-Prince; and

6           WHEREAS, The Haitian government has confirmed a death toll  
7 of more than 230,000 persons as a result of the disaster; and

8           WHEREAS, Following the catastrophic damage to their  
9 villages and cities, many of the earthquake survivors now live  
10 in tent cities and are more vulnerable than ever to epidemics  
11 of infectious disease, particularly with the region's rainy  
12 season approaching; and

13           WHEREAS, Due to many factors, including the  
14 already-extreme poverty of the nation, thousands of Haitian  
15 children had been provably and legally abandoned and  
16 relinquished to the Haitian government by their parents prior  
17 to the devastation of that January day; and

18           WHEREAS, These children, known as "Category 3" orphans, are  
19 officially confirmed as orphans eligible for intercountry  
20 adoption but do not meet the specific criteria outlined by the  
21 United States Department of Homeland Security that would allow

1 them to enter the United States; and

2 WHEREAS, An additional unknown number of "Category 2"  
3 orphans--those children who are both eligible for intercountry  
4 adoption and matched with American adoptive parents prior to  
5 January 12, 2010--have yet to be allowed to join their new  
6 families in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, At least twenty-one orphans are destined for  
8 families in the United States, though their adoptions have  
9 since been mired in unfortunate bureaucracy; and

10 WHEREAS, Twelve of these children remain in diplomatic  
11 limbo in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania facility, while at least  
12 nine remain at the God's Littlest Angels orphanage near  
13 Port-au-Prince, run by Dixie Bickel of Clinton, Illinois; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2007, the United Nations Children's Fund  
15 numbered the orphan population of Haiti at more than 380,000  
16 children; following the earthquake, some organizations  
17 estimate that number to have more than tripled; and

18 WHEREAS, Whatever the number of orphans, there are families  
19 in Illinois and throughout the United States who are ready,  
20 willing, and able to welcome these provably abandoned children  
21 into loving homes; and

1           WHEREAS, Every provably abandoned child who is taken into a  
2 home within the United States dramatically reduces the strain  
3 on the post-earthquake relief efforts in Haiti; therefore, be  
4 it

5           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
6 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
7 remember the victims and survivors of the Haiti earthquake  
8 disaster; and be it further

9           RESOLVED, That we implore the United States government to  
10 expedite the approval of "Category 2" and "Category 3" orphans  
11 so that the children who are in need of loving homes may find  
12 them quickly and safely; and be it further

13           RESOLVED, That we applaud the efforts of organizations such  
14 as God's littlest Angels orphanage, that are so dedicated to  
15 important relief work in Haiti, and we call on all Illinois  
16 citizens to support such organizations in whatever capacity  
17 they are able; and be it further

18           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be sent  
19 to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn; Hillary Clinton, United States  
20 Secretary of State; Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the federal  
21 Department of Health and Human Services; Julie Hamos, Director

1 of the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the Illinois  
2 congressional delegation.